

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 INR-10 COME-00 /046 W
-----016293 140954Z /10 L

R 131724Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4775
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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USOECD

EXCON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: ESTC, COCOM
SUBJECT: NOMINATION OF NEW COCOM CHAIRMAN

REFS: A. ROME 1449 B. ROME 12409 C. STATE 167107

1. SUMMARY: COCOM CHAIRMAN INDELICATO HAS INFORMED CONSULTATIVE GROUP PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES THAT THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT IS TRANSFERRING HIM AND IS NOMINATING MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY GIORGIO REITANO TO REPLACE HIM. ACTION REQUESTED: AUTHORIZATION TO INFORM INDELICATO THAT THE USG CAN SUPPORT REITANO'S NOMINATION.

2. COCOM CHAIRMAN INDELICATO HAS SENT LETTERS TO THE VARIOUS COUNTRY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP INDICATING THAT THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT IS TRANSFERRING HIM TO OTHER DUTIES AND AT THE SAME TIME IS NOMINATING GIORGIO REITANO FOR THE POSITION OF CHAIRMAN. TEXT OF THE LETTER RECEIVED BY AMBASSADOR SALZMAN IS AS FOLLOWS:

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"AS I HAVE ALREADY INFORMED THE HEAD OF YOUR PERMANENT DELEGATION TO THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE, THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO APPOINT ME TO OTHER DUTIES. IN CONSEQUENCE, I SHALL LEAVE THE OFFICE OF SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP AND CHAIRMAN OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

IN THIS CONNECTION, THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS
THE HONOUR TO SUBMIT THE CANDIDATURE OF MR. GIORGIO
REITANO, MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY.

MR. REITANO, AS YOU WILL NOTICE FROM THE CURRICULUM
VITAE ATTACHED HEREWITH, HAS BEEN IN THE LAST YEARS IN
CHARGE OF THE DESK FOR TRADE WITH THE EAST EUROPEAN AND
OTHER COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, AND AT THE SAME TIME OF COCOM
AFFAIRS IN THE ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY; THIS FACT,
TOGETHER WITH HIS PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN SEVERAL POSTS
ABROAD, HAS GIVEN HIM A PARTICULAR COMPETENCE IN THE
FIELD OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH ARE DEALT WITH BY OUR
COMMITTEE. THIS IS ONE OF THE REASONS WHY THE ITALIAN
GOVERNMENT HOPES THAT THIS CANDIDATURE WILL MEET WITH
ACCEPTANCE OF YOUR GOVERNMENT.

WAITING FOR YOUR REPLY, I AM, SIR,

ALBERTO INDELICATO"

2. THE CURRICULUM VITAE ACCOMPANYING THE LETTER CONTAINS
ESSENTIALLY THE SAME INFORMATION AS IN REFS A AND B.
IT ALSO NOTES THAT REITANO IS PROFICIENT IN BOTH ENGLISH
AND FRENCH AND THAT DURING HIS ASSIGNMENT IN THE U.S.
HE DEALT WITH COCOM MATTERS ON A BILATERAL LEVEL. IT
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EXPLAINS THAT AS THE HEAD OF THE SECOND BUREAU IN THE
GENERAL DIRECTION OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, HE HANDLED MANY
ASPECTS OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS INCLUDING COCOM AND
EXPORT CONTROL MATTERS.

3. FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF REF C, USDEL HAD INFORMED
INDELICATO THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAD INFORMED THE ITALIAN
EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON THAT THE USG WOULD PREFER TO SEE
HIM REMAIN ON AS CHAIRMAN DURING THE LIST REVIEW.
INDELICATO RESPONDED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD ALREADY
MADE THE DECISION TO TRANSFER HIM. HE SAID THAT HE
APPRECIATED THE "VOTE OF CONFIDENCE" FROM THE USG BUT
SAID THAT NOTHING COULD BE DONE TO CHANGE THE DECISION
OF HIS GOVERNMENT. INDELICATO INDICATED THAT IF
REITANO IS APPOINTED, THERE WOULD BE A TWO-WEEK OVERLAP
OF THEIR ASSIGNMENTS HERE IN PARIS IN SEPTEMBER.

4. PRIOR TO SENDING THE LETTERS TO THE CONSULTATIVE
GROUP, INDELICATO HAD CONFERRED WITH ALL OF THE DELEGATES,

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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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INFORMING THEM THAT THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO NOMINATE REITANO, AND THEY INDICATED THAT THEIR COUNTRIES WOULD NOT PUT FORWARD ANY CANDIDATES FOR THE CHAIRMANSHIP. USDEL CHECKED WITH ALL OF THE OTHER DELEGATES (EXCEPT THE BELGIAN DEL, WHO IS OUT OF TOWN), AND THEY ALL STATED THAT THEY HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THEIR GOVERNMENTS WILL NOT SUPPORT THE NOMINATION OF REEITANO.

5. USDEL REALIZES THAT AMEMBASSY ROME HAS CERTAIN DOUBTS ABOUT THE QUALIFICATIONS OF REITANO FOR COCOM CHAIRMANSHIP BUT DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE IN OUR INTEREST TO ATTEMPT TO OPPOSE HIS NOMINATION. FIRST OF ALL, AS INDICATED ABOVE, THERE ARE NOW NO OTHER CANDIDATES. SECOND, EVEN IF WE COULD GET THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT TO RECONSIDER REITANO'S NOMINATION, WE CANNOT BE ASSURED THAT IT WOULD NOMINATE SOMEONE MORE ACCEPTABLE. AT LEAST REITANO APPEARS TO BE WELL-DISPOSED TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES AND IS KNOWLEDGEABLE ON COCOM AND OTHER EAST-EST MATTERS. THIRD, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WERE THE U.S. TO ATTEMPT TO BLOCK REITANO'S NOMINATION, IT MIGHT ENCOURAGE SOME OTHER MEMBER (E.G., BELGIUM) TO PROPOSE A CANDIDATE WHO MIGHT BE EVEN LESS

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SUITABLE. USDEL BELIEVES THAT WE SHOULD AVOID A GRATUITOUS CONFRONTATION IN THE COMMITTEE OVER THE CHAIARMANSHIP AND WE SHOULD DO NOTHING THAT MIGHT BE INTERPRETED BY THE OTHERS, INCLUDING THE ITALIANS, AS U.S. DISSATISFACTION WITH THE ITALIANS' COCOM CHAIARMANSHIP.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: FOR ALL THE ABOVE REASONS, AUTHORIZATION IS REQUESTED FOR AMBASSADOR SALZMAN TO NOTIFY INDELICATO THAT THE USG WILL SUPPORT THE NOMINATION OF REITANO AS CHAIRMAN.

SALZMAN

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